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JANUARY 14, 2021 BY RONNIE

Media Subsidies To Counter Online “Misinformation”, Groups Led By Political Operatives

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Helping Citizens Critically Assess and Become Resilient Against Harmful Online Disinformation

From: Canadian Heritage

News release

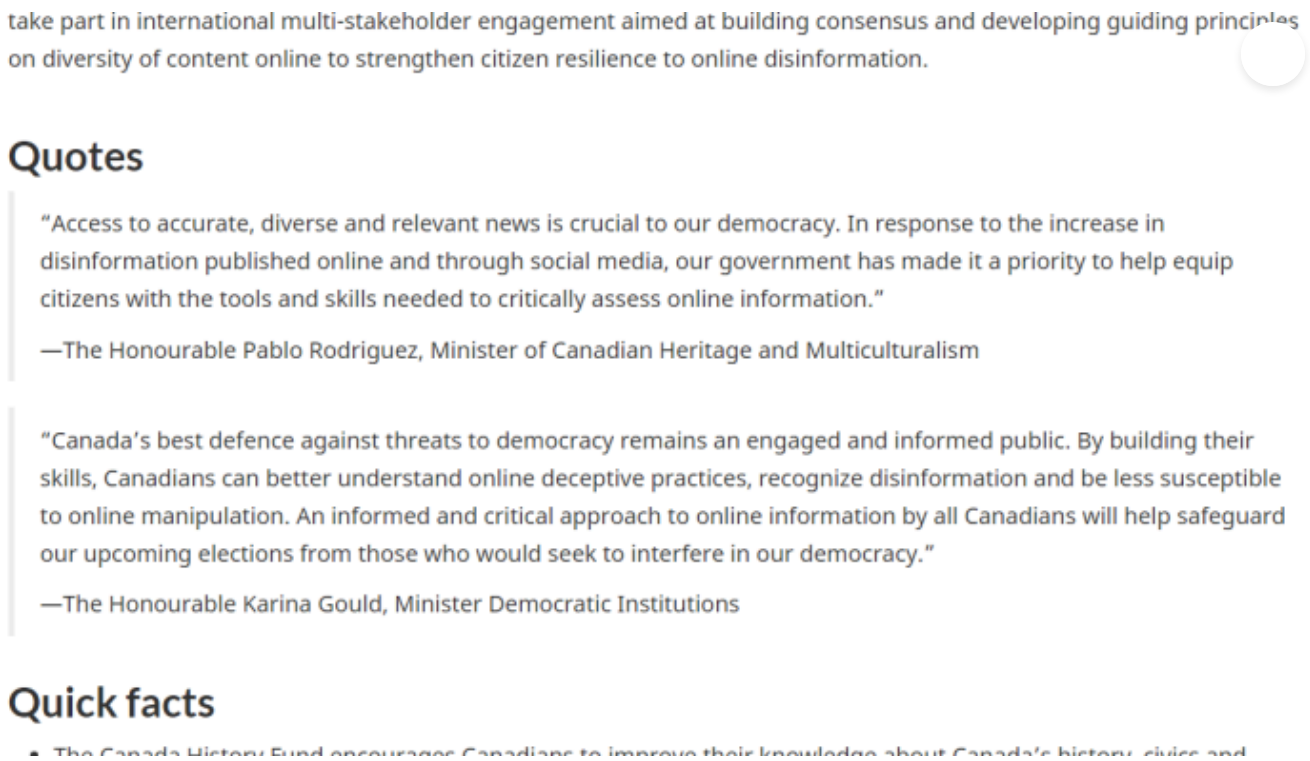
GATINEAU, July 2, 2019

A strong democracy relies on Canadians having access to diverse and reliable sources of news and information so that they can form opinions, hold governments and individuals to account, and participate in public conversations.

The Honourable Karina Gould, Minister of Democratic Institutions, today announced several citizen-focused activities that will build citizens' critical thinking and preparedness against online disinformation, and other online harms. She made

In July 2019, the Federal Government announced it would be funding many initiatives to counter “online disinformation”. This is 6 months ***PRIOR*** to the alleged pandemic that took place. Again, this was set up ***IN ADVANCE*** of 2020. And it’s strange just how many of the leaders of these groups have political connections.

1. Anti-Disinfo Just Another Gov’t Program



take part in international multi-stakeholder engagement aimed at building consensus and developing guiding principles on diversity of content online to strengthen citizen resilience to online disinformation.

Quotes

> “Access to accurate, diverse and relevant news is crucial to our democracy. In response to the increase in disinformation published online and through social media, our government has made it a priority to help equip citizens with the tools and skills needed to critically assess online information.”
>
> —The Honourable Pablo Rodriguez, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism

> “Canada’s best defence against threats to democracy remains an engaged and informed public. By building their skills, Canadians can better understand online deceptive practices, recognize disinformation and be less susceptible to online manipulation. An informed and critical approach to online information by all Canadians will help safeguard our upcoming elections from those who would seek to interfere in our democracy.”
>
> —The Honourable Karina Gould, Minister Democratic Institutions

Quick facts

- The Canada History Fund encourages Canadians to improve their knowledge about Canada’s history, civics and

News release
GATINEAU, July 2, 2019
.
A strong democracy relies on Canadians having access to diverse and reliable sources of news and information so that they can form opinions, hold governments and individuals to account, and participate in public conversations.

The Honourable Karina Gould, Minister of Democratic Institutions, today announced ***several citizen-focused activities that will build citizens’ critical thinking and preparedness against online disinformation, and other online harms***. She made this announcement on behalf of the Honourable Pablo Rodriguez, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism. This announcement is part of the Government of Canada’s plan to ***safeguard our democratic processes from threats of interference as we approach the 2019 General Election***.

On ***January 30, Minister Gould announced funding of $7 million for citizen-focused activities under Canadian Heritage’s Digital Citizen Initiative to support eligible***

organizations using four existing programs: the Canada History Fund, Youth Take Charge, Exchanges Canada and the Canada Periodical Fund. The Initiative promotes civic, news and digital media literacy through third-party educational activities and programming to help citizens become resilient against online harms.

Strengthening Canadians’ resilience to online disinformation

.

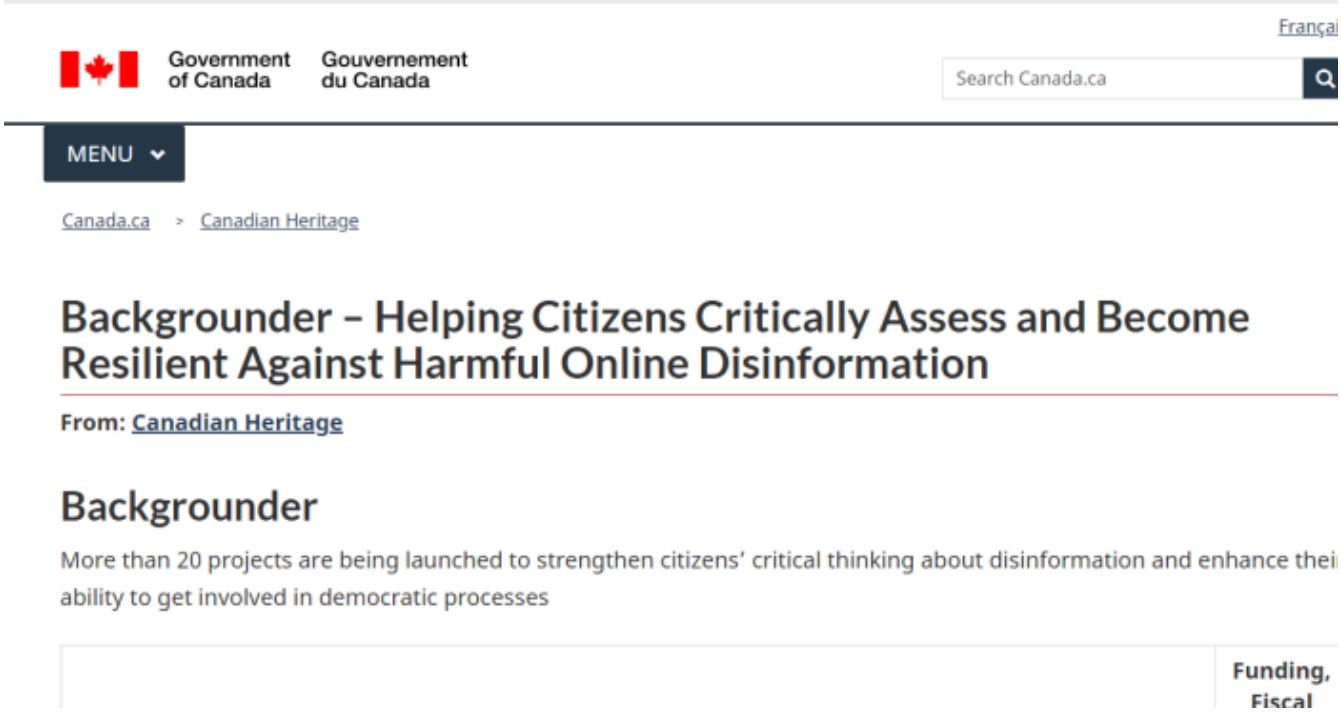
Canadian Heritage will also invest ***$19.4 million over four years in a new Digital Citizen Research Program to help Canadians understand online disinformation and its impact on Canadian society***, and to build the evidence base that will be used to identify possible actions and future policy-making in this space. This investment will also enable Canada to take part in international multi-stakeholder engagement aimed at building consensus and developing guiding principles on diversity of content online to strengthen citizen resilience to online disinformation.

Officially, this program against “disinformation” was set in place with the 2019 election in mind. However, that seems strange, given the election itself was just 4 months away.

That said, the timing lines up pretty well if, let’s say, a pandemic were to break out, and Canadians started questioning how real it was.

It’s worth pointing out that this is by no means the first act of financial support the Government (or, really, taxpayers), had shelled out for.

2. Groups That Are Receiving The Money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Backgrounder – Helping Citizens Critically Assess and Become Resilient Against Harmful Online Disinformation
From: Canadian Heritage
Backgrounder
More than 20 projects are being launched to strengthen citizens' critical thinking about disinformation and enhance thei
ability to get involved in democratic processes
Funding,
Fiscal

GROUP	YEAR	AMOUNT
Agence Science-Presse	2019-2020	$129,345
Apathy is Boring	2018-2019	$100,000
Apathy is Boring	2019-2020	$340,000
Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada	2019-2020	$460,000
Canadian News Media Association	2019-2020	$484,300
CIVIX	2018-2019	$275,000
CIVIX	2019-2020	$400,000
Encounters with Canada	2018-2019	$100,000
Quebec Professional Journalists	2019-2020	$202,570
Global Vision	2019-2020	$260,000
Historica Canada	2019-2020	$250,000
Institute for Canadian Citizenship	2019-2020	$250,000
Journalists for Human Rights	2019-2020	$250,691

Magazines Canada	2019-2020	$63,000
McGill University	2019-2020	$1,196,205
MediaSmarts	2019-2020	$650,000
New Canadian Media	2019-2020	$66,517
Ryerson University	2019-2020	$290,250
Samara Centre for Democracy	2019-2020	$59,200
Sask Weekly Newspapers Ass’n	2019-2020	$70,055
Simon Fraser University	2019-2020	$175,000
Vubble Inc. Unboxed project	2019-2020	$299,000

So, who’s actually getting the money. Here are some of the groups listed by the Canadian Government, whose goals are to counter online “disinformation”.

In later sections, let’s take a look at who is actually running some of these organizations. The results, and the connections, may be quite surprising.

3. Emergency Support Fund For Organizations

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Emergency Support Fund for Cultural, Heritage and Sport Organizations

On May 8, 2020, the Minister of Canadian Heritage announced the details of a new COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund for Cultural, Heritage and Sport Organizations. The $500 million Emergency Support Fund provides additional temporary relief to support cultural, heritage and sport organizations and help them plan for the future. The Fund will help maintain jobs and support business continuity for organizations whose viability has been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Fund will be administered by Canadian Heritage and divided among select departmental programs and Portfolio agencies as well as key delivery organizations, specifically:

- Up to $326.8 million to be distributed by Canadian Heritage, of which:

On May 8, 2020, the Minister of Canadian Heritage announced the details of a ***new COVID-19 Emergency Support Fund for Cultural, Heritage and Sport Organizations. The $500 million Emergency Support Fund provides additional temporary relief*** to support cultural, heritage and sport organizations and help them plan for the future. The Fund will help maintain jobs and support business continuity for organizations whose viability has been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ottawa announced in the Spring of 2020 that it would help fund media outlets that had been harmed by this “pandemic”. That’s nice: crash the economy, and then hand out money with the expectation of favourable coverage.

4. International Engagement Strategy

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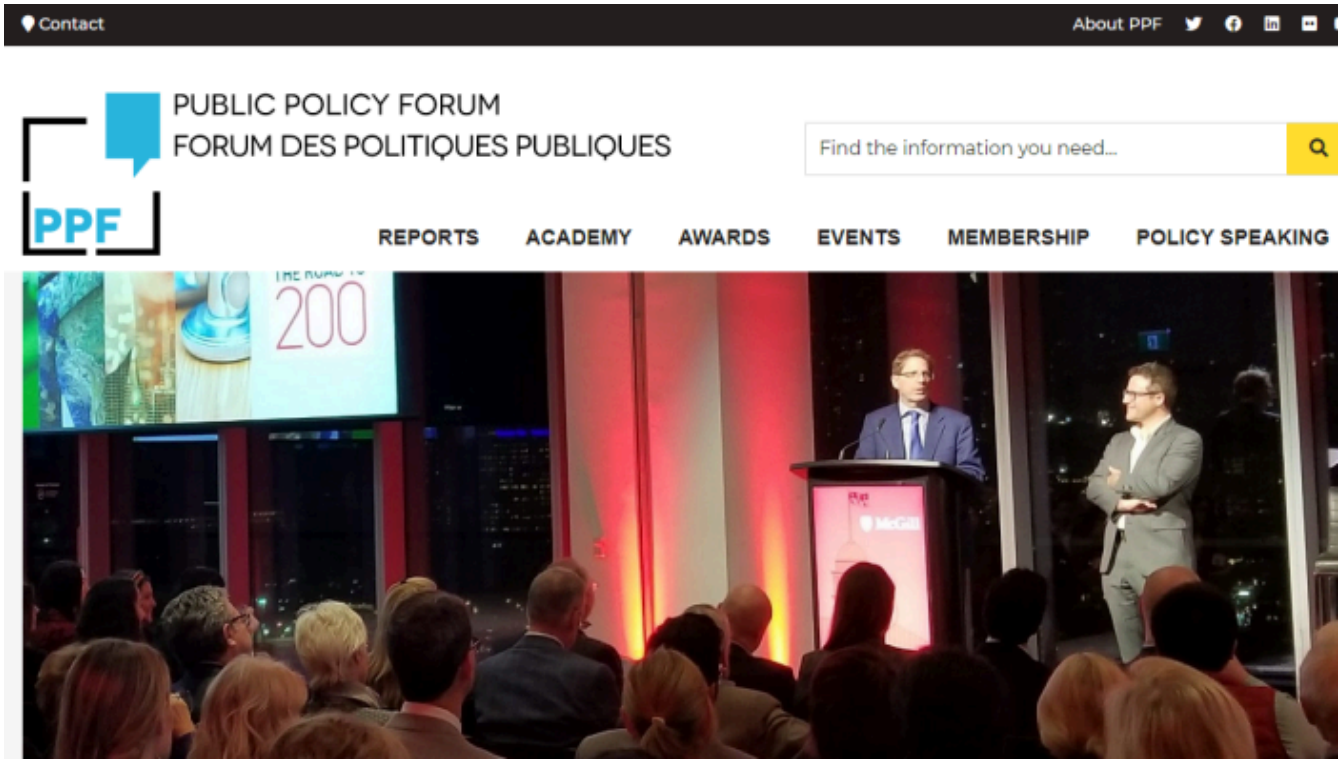
Diversity of content in the digital age
International Engagement Strategy
On this page
International meeting at Stanford University, California
Canada-France joint declaration
International meeting in Ottawa
Canadian Heritage's International engagement strategy on diversity of content is implemented through a series of meetings as well as open and transparent discussions, based on the following key principles:
Civil society, digital platforms and governments share responsibilities for encouraging a diversity of content online; and

- International meeting at Stanford University, California
- Canada-France joint declaration
- International meeting in Ottawa

The Canadian Government’s strategy to control the media is not limited to being within the borders. There are a number of international initiatives that are going on as well.

5. Public Policy Forum



> The Digital Democracy Project is a multi-year project to ***analyze and respond to the increasing amounts of disinformation and hate in the digital public sphere***. It will monitor digital and social media in real time, coordinate with international research and policy development projects, and develop public policy responses to counter these threats to democratic institutions and social cohesion.

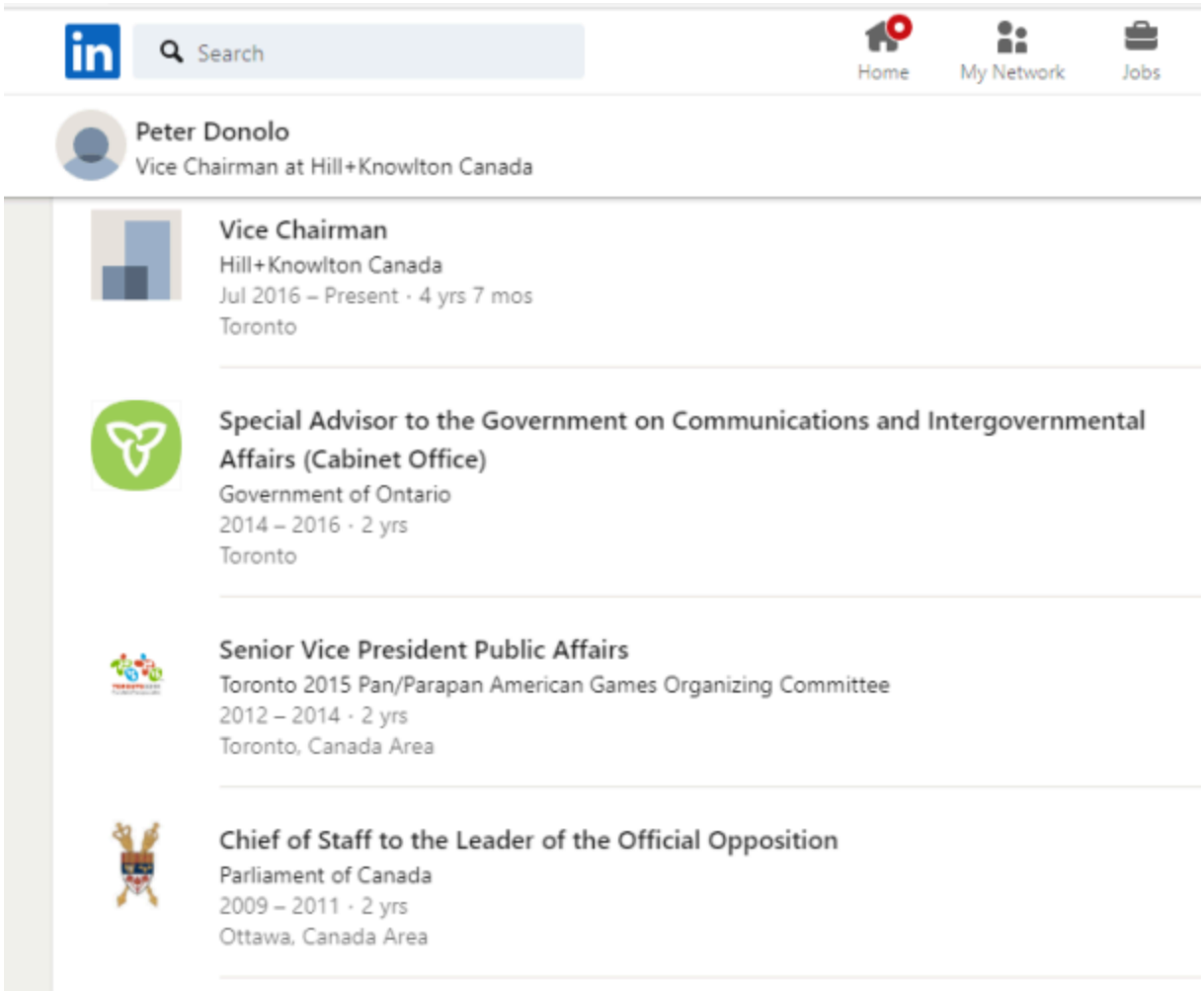
> Public Policy Forum President & CEO Edward Greenspon and recently appointed Max Bell School of Public Policy professor Taylor Owen announced the launch of a multi-year project to ***analyze and respond to the increasing amounts of disinformation and hate in the digital public sphere***.

> The Digital Democracy Project (DDP) will commission research and journalism to gain a greater understanding of how disinformation is growing in the digital ecosystem. It will ***monitor digital and social media in real time, coordinate with international research and policy development projects, and develop public policy responses to counter these threats*** to democratic institutions and social cohesion.

Interesting how subjective the terms “hate” and “misinformation” can be. In fact, the meanings of these words can — and often are — misconstrued in order to shut down legitimate

discussion on important topics. Will this research just be more research into how to go about doing it?

6. Peter Donolo: Longtime Liberal Strategist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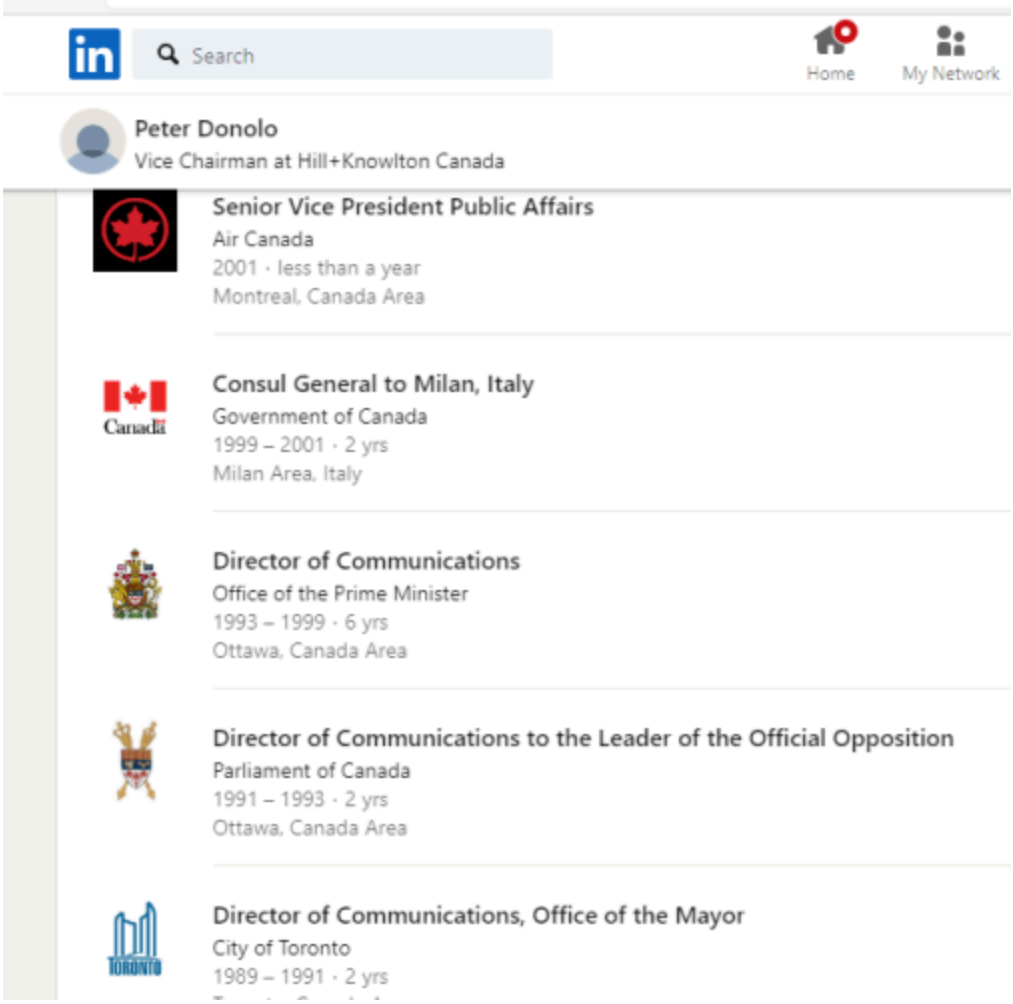
Jobs
Peter Donolo
Vice Chairman at Hill+Knowlton Canada
Vice Chairman
Hill+Knowlton Canada
Jul 2016 – Present · 4 yrs 7 mos
Toronto
Special Advisor to the Government on Communications and Intergovernmental Affairs (Cabinet Office)
Government of Ontario
2014 – 2016 · 2 yrs
Toronto
Senior Vice President Public Affairs
Toronto 2015 Pan/Parapan American Games Organizing Committee
2012 – 2014 · 2 yrs
Toronto, Canada Area
Chief of Staff to the Leader of the Official Opposition
Parliament of Canada
2009 – 2011 · 2 yrs
Ottawa, Canada Area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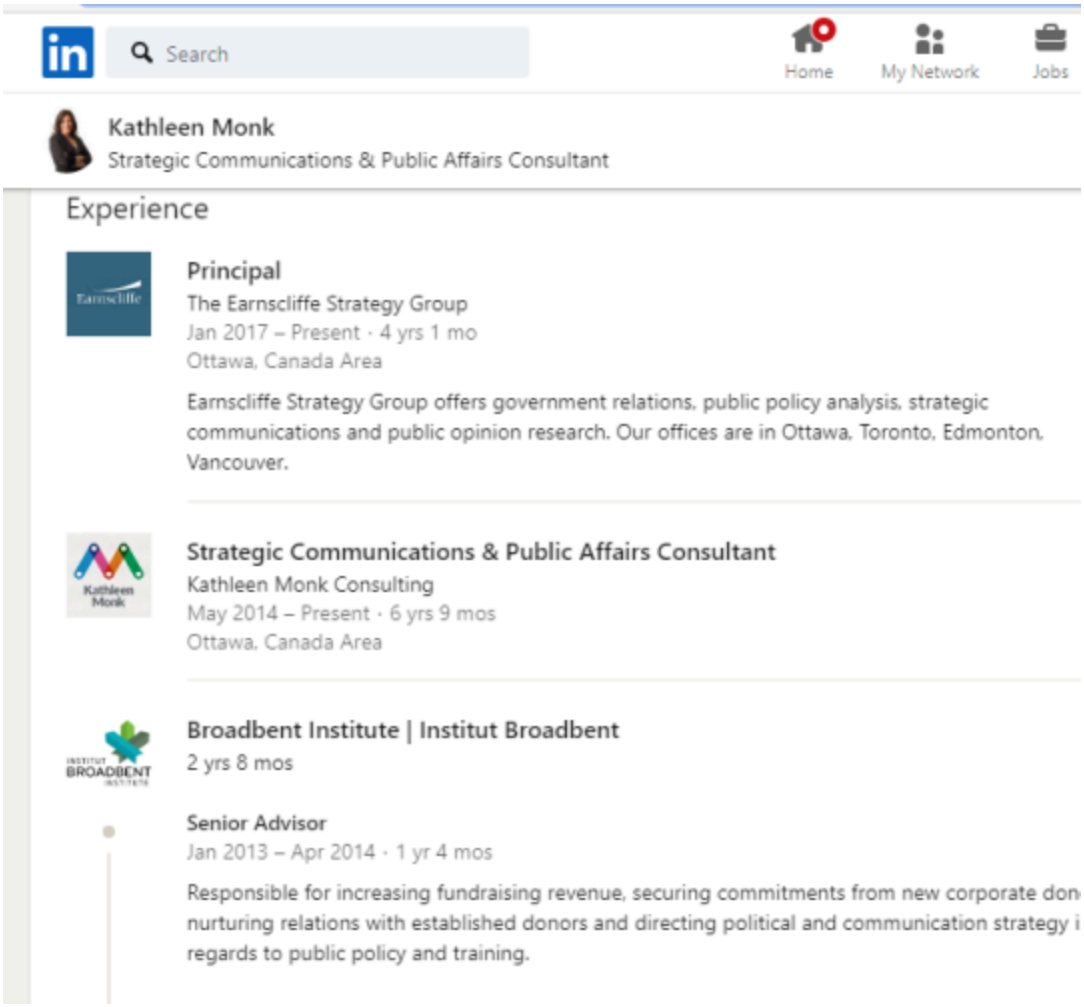
Peter Donolo
Vice Chairman at Hill+Knowlton Canada
Senior Vice President Public Affairs
Air Canada
2001 · less than a year
Montreal, Canada Area
Consul General to Milan, Italy
Government of Canada
1999 – 2001 · 2 yrs
Milan Area, Italy
Director of Communications
Office of the Prime Minister
1993 – 1999 · 6 yrs
Ottawa, Canada Area
Director of Communications to the Leader of the Official Opposition
Parliament of Canada
1991 – 1993 · 2 yrs
Ottawa, Canada Area
Director of Communications, Office of the Mayor
City of Toronto
1989 – 1991 · 2 yrs

Peter Donolo is a longtime Liberal operative. He was Chretien’s Communications Director, he worked in the Office of the Official Opposition for Michael Ignatieff, and other political roles. Ignatieff, incidently, is now a Vice-President of Soros’ Open Society Group.

Donolo is also now a Board Member at CIVIX and Journalists for Human Rights. He has ties to the Liberals, who are also funding various initiatives to counter misinformation.

7. Kathleen Monk: Longtime NDP Operative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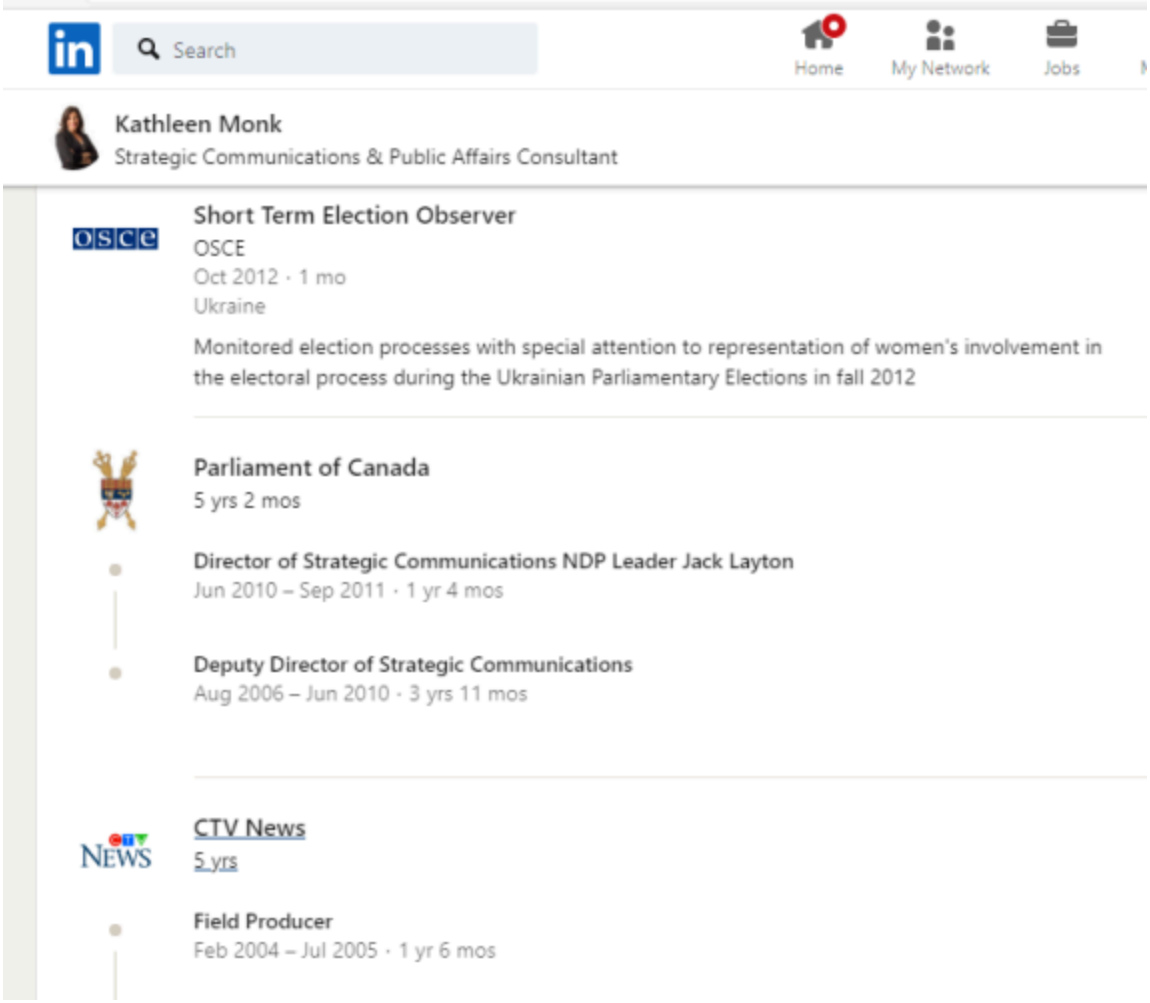
Kathleen Monk
Strategic Communications & Public Affairs Consultant
Experience
Principal
The Earnscliffe Strategy Group
Jan 2017 – Present · 4 yrs 1 mo
Ottawa, Canada Area
Earnscliffe Strategy Group offers government relations, public policy analysis, strategic communications and public opinion research. Our offices are in Ottawa, Toronto, Edmonton, Vancouver.
Strategic Communications & Public Affairs Consultant
Kathleen Monk Consulting
May 2014 – Present · 6 yrs 9 mos
Ottawa, Canada Area
Broadbent Institute | Institut Broadbent
2 yrs 8 mos
Senior Advisor
Jan 2013 – Apr 2014 · 1 yr 4 mos
Responsible for increasing fundraising revenue, securing commitments from new corporate don
nurturing relations with established donors and directing political and communication strategy i
regards to public policy and training.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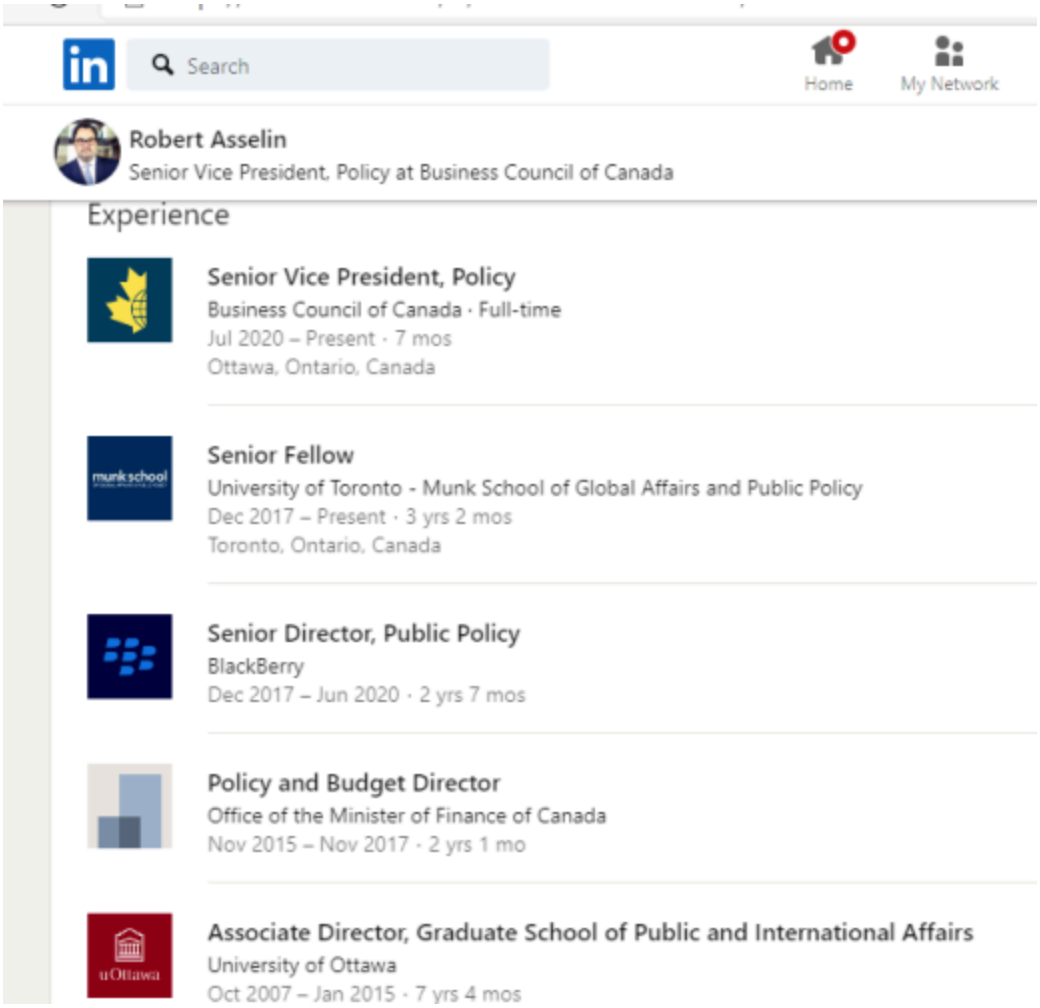
Jobs
Kathleen Monk
Strategic Communications & Public Affairs Consultant
Short Term Election Observer
OSCE
Oct 2012 · 1 mo
Ukraine
Monitored election processes with special attention to representation of women's involvement in the electoral process during the Ukrainian Parliamentary Elections in fall 2012
Parliament of Canada
5 yrs 2 mos
Director of Strategic Communications NDP Leader Jack Layton
Jun 2010 – Sep 2011 · 1 yr 4 mos
Deputy Director of Strategic Communications
Aug 2006 – Jun 2010 · 3 yrs 11 mos
CTV News
5 yrs
Field Producer
Feb 2004 – Jul 2005 · 1 yr 6 mos

Kathleen Monk was involved with the Federal NDP (under Jack Layton), and is part of the Broadbent Institute – named after ex-NDP Leader Ed Broadbent.

She is now a Board Member at CIVIX.

8. Robert Asselin: Ex-Trudeau Operative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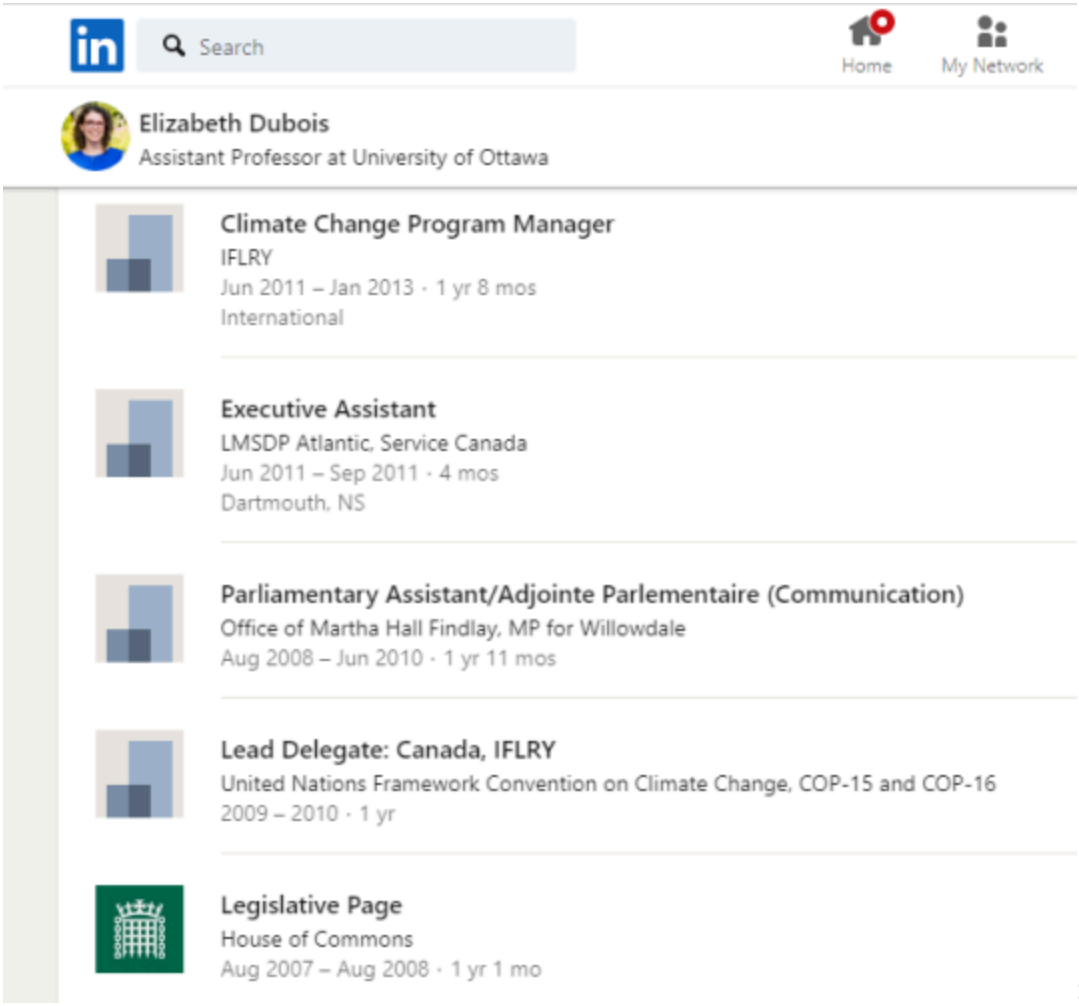
Robert Asselin
Senior Vice President, Policy at Business Council of Canada
Experience
Senior Vice President, Policy
Business Council of Canada · Full-time
Jul 2020 – Present · 7 mos
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
Senior Fellow
University of Toronto - Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy
Dec 2017 – Present · 3 yrs 2 mos
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Senior Director, Public Policy
BlackBerry
Dec 2017 – Jun 2020 · 2 yrs 7 mos
Policy and Budget Director
Office of the Minister of Finance of Canada
Nov 2015 – Nov 2017 · 2 yrs 1 mo
Associate Director, Graduate School of Public and International Affairs
University of Ottawa
Oct 2007 – Jan 2015 · 7 yrs 4 mos

Robert Asselin worked in the Ministry of Finance from November 2015 to November 2017, under Justin Trudeau and Bill Morneau. He also worked at Blackberry.

Currently, he is a Board Member of CIVIX.

9. Elizabeth Dubois: Assistant To Liberal MP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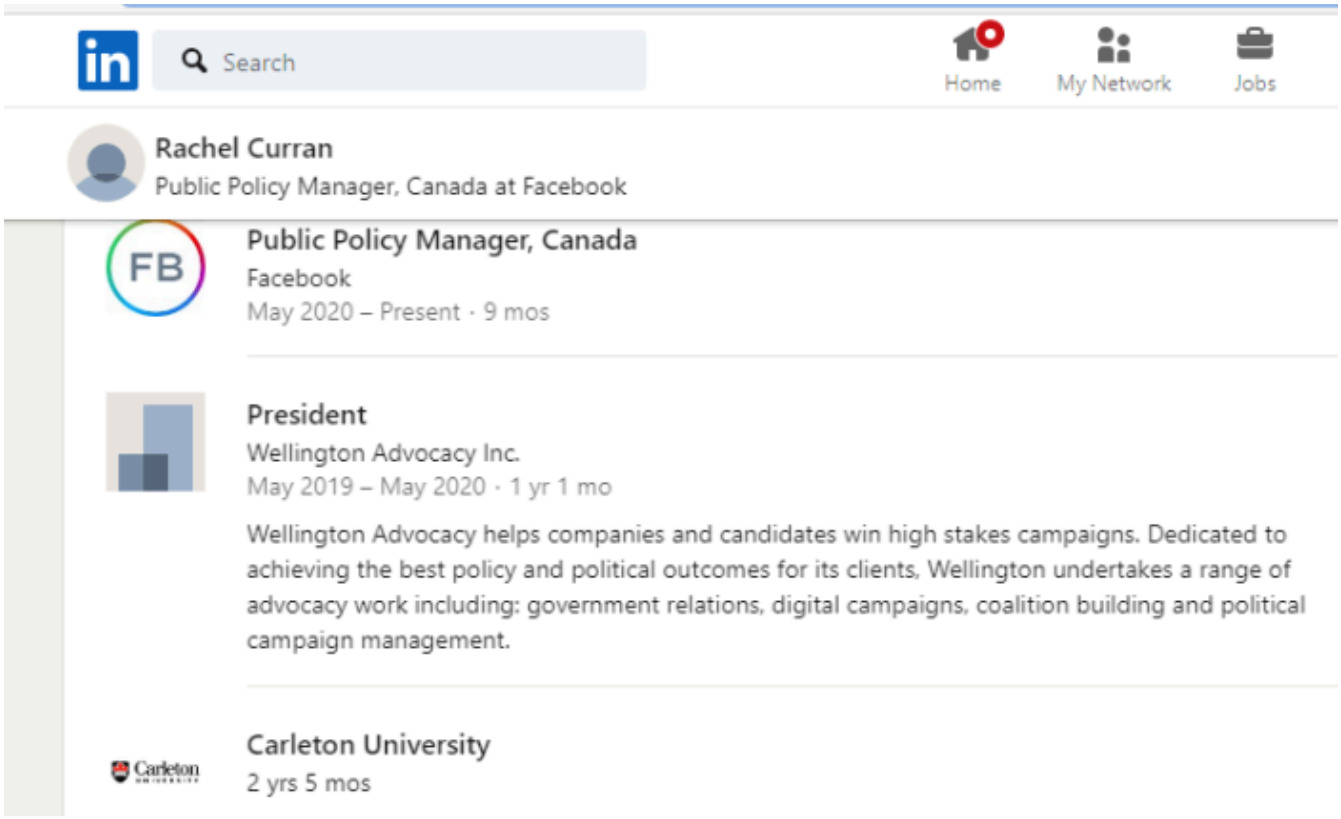
Elizabeth Dubois
Assistant Professor at University of Ottawa
Climate Change Program Manager
IFLRY
Jun 2011 – Jan 2013 · 1 yr 8 mos
International
Executive Assistant
LMSDP Atlantic, Service Canada
Jun 2011 – Sep 2011 · 4 mos
Dartmouth, NS
Parliamentary Assistant/Adjointe Parlementaire (Communication)
Office of Martha Hall Findlay, MP for Willowdale
Aug 2008 – Jun 2010 · 1 yr 11 mos
Lead Delegate: Canada, IFLRY
United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, COP-15 and COP-16
2009 – 2010 · 1 yr
Legislative Page
House of Commons
Aug 2007 – Aug 2008 · 1 yr 1 mo
>

Elizabeth Dubois was an assistant for Diane Hall Findley, who was a Member of Parliament. She also worked as a climate change program manager.

Now, Dubois is a Board Member at CIVIX.

10. Rachel Curran: Harper Operative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Home
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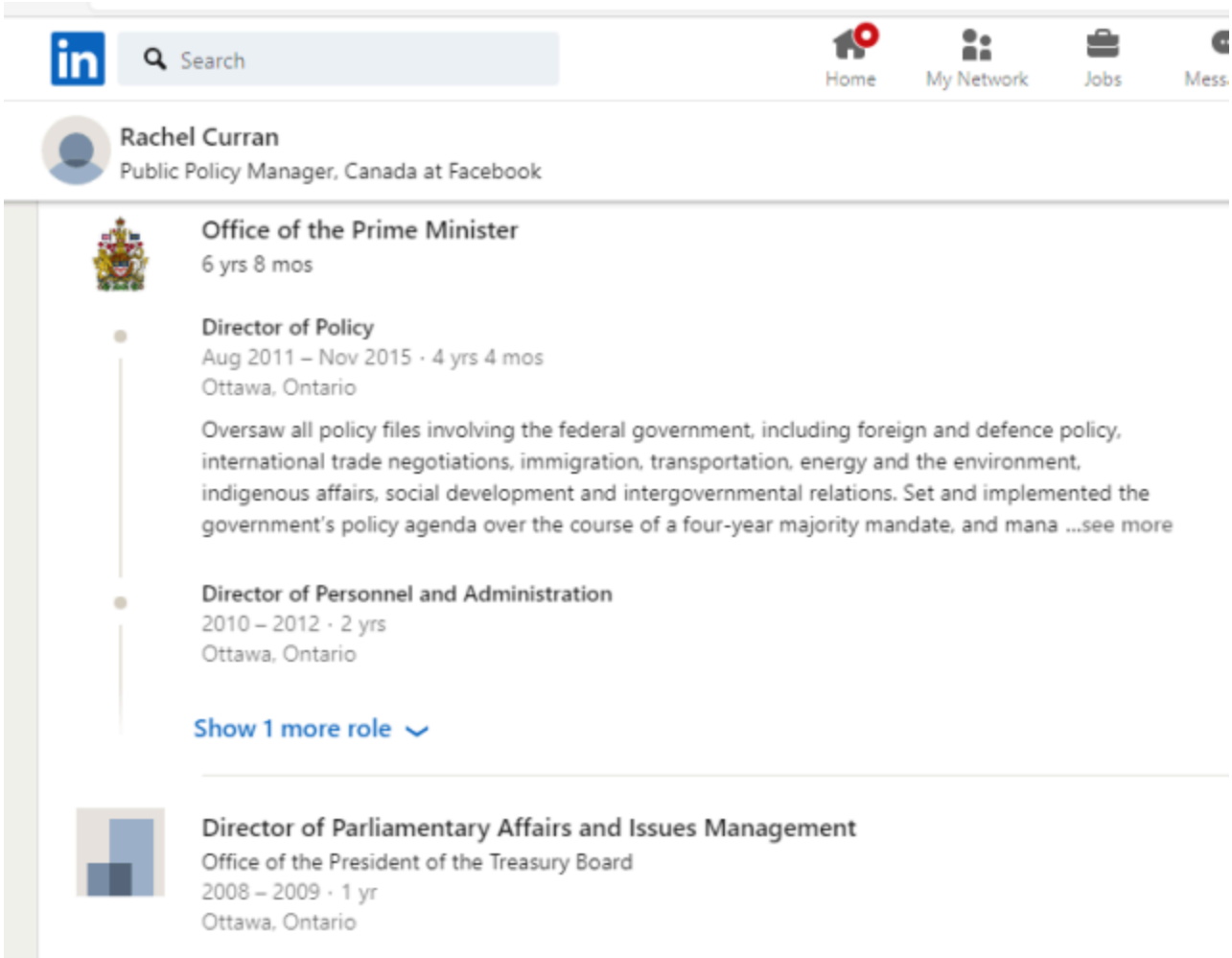
Jobs
Rachel Curran
Public Policy Manager, Canada at Facebook
FB
Public Policy Manager, Canada
Facebook
May 2020 – Present · 9 mos
President
Wellington Advocacy Inc.
May 2019 – May 2020 · 1 yr 1 mo
Wellington Advocacy helps companies and candidates win high stakes campaigns. Dedicated to achieving the best policy and political outcomes for its clients, Wellington undertakes a range of advocacy work including: government relations, digital campaigns, coalition building and political campaign management.
Carleton University
2 yrs 5 mos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Home
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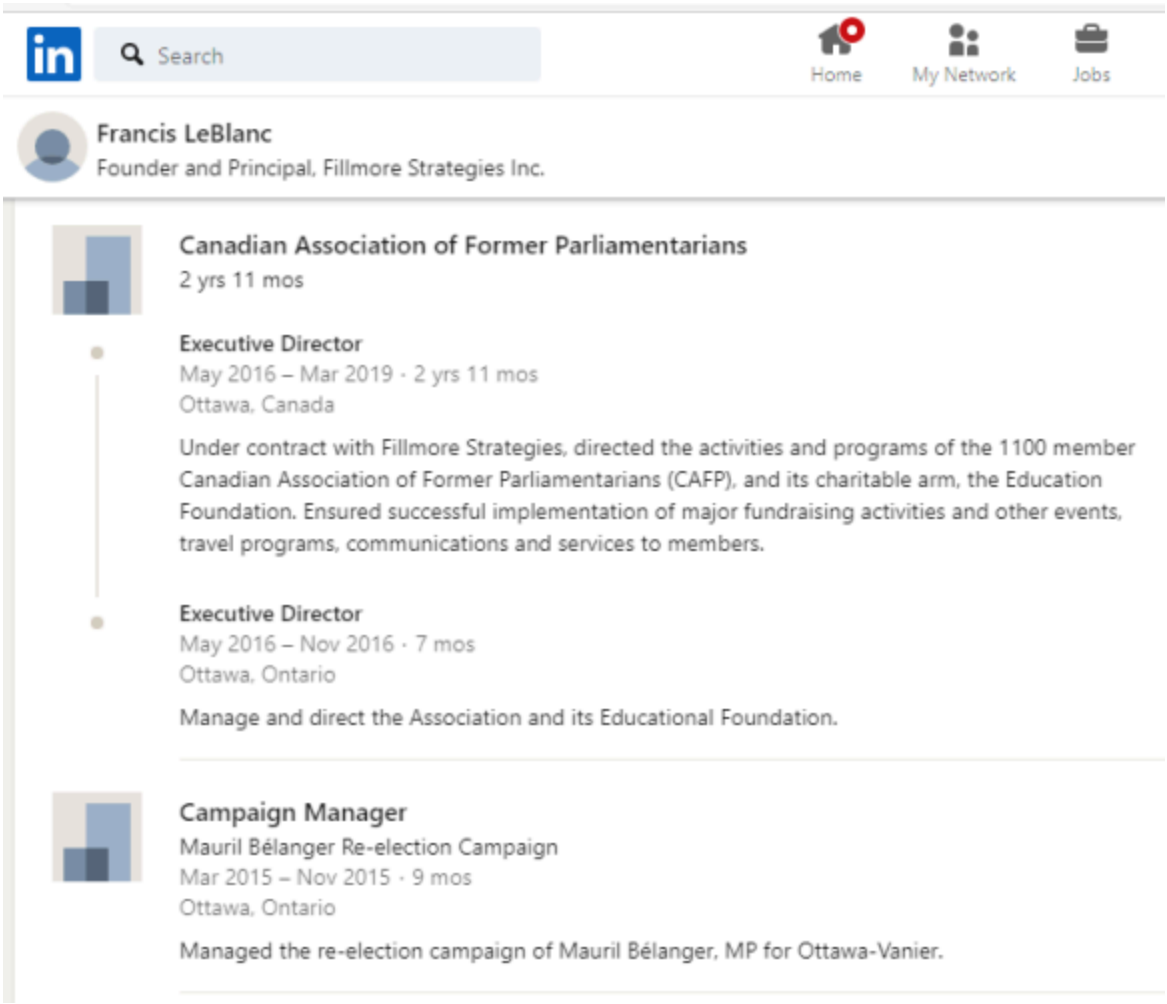
Jobs
Rachel Curran
Public Policy Manager, Canada at Facebook
Office of the Prime Minister
6 yrs 8 mos
Director of Policy
Aug 2011 – Nov 2015 · 4 yrs 4 mos
Ottawa, Ontario
Oversaw all policy files involving the federal government, including foreign and defence policy, international trade negotiations, immigration, transportation, energy and the environment, indigenous affairs, social development and intergovernmental relations. Set and implemented the government’s policy agenda over the course of a four-year majority mandate, and mana ...see more
Director of Personnel and Administration
2010 – 2012 · 2 yrs
Ottawa, Ontario
Show 1 more role
Director of Parliamentary Affairs and Issues Management
Office of the President of the Treasury Board
2008 – 2009 · 1 yr
Ottawa, Ontario

Rachel Curran is a public policy manager at Facebook Canada. She also spent years in the Office of the Prime Minister, when Harper was in office. She’s part of CIVIX now.

11. Francis LeBlanc: Ex-Liberal MP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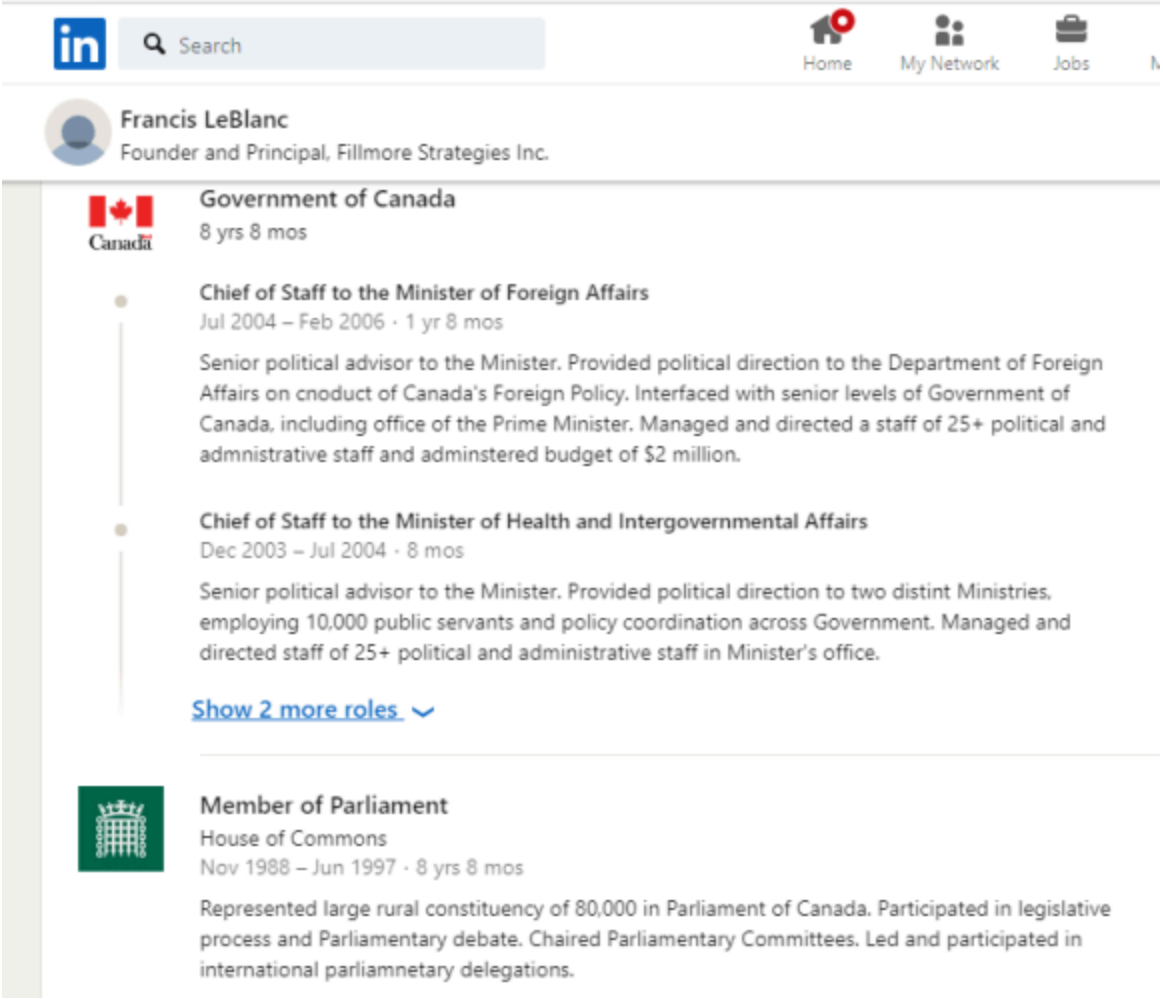
Jobs
Francis LeBlanc
Founder and Principal, Fillmore Strategies Inc.
Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians
2 yrs 11 mos
Executive Director
May 2016 – Mar 2019 · 2 yrs 11 mos
Ottawa, Canada
Under contract with Fillmore Strategies, directed the activities and programs of the 1100 member Canadian Association of Former Parliamentarians (CAFP), and its charitable arm, the Education Foundation. Ensured successful implementation of major fundraising activities and other events, travel programs, communications and services to members.
Executive Director
May 2016 – Nov 2016 · 7 mos
Ottawa, Ontario
Manage and direct the Association and its Educational Foundation.
Campaign Manager
Mauril Bélanger Re-election Campaign
Mar 2015 – Nov 2015 · 9 mos
Ottawa, Ontario
Managed the re-election campaign of Mauril Bélanger, MP for Ottawa-Vanier.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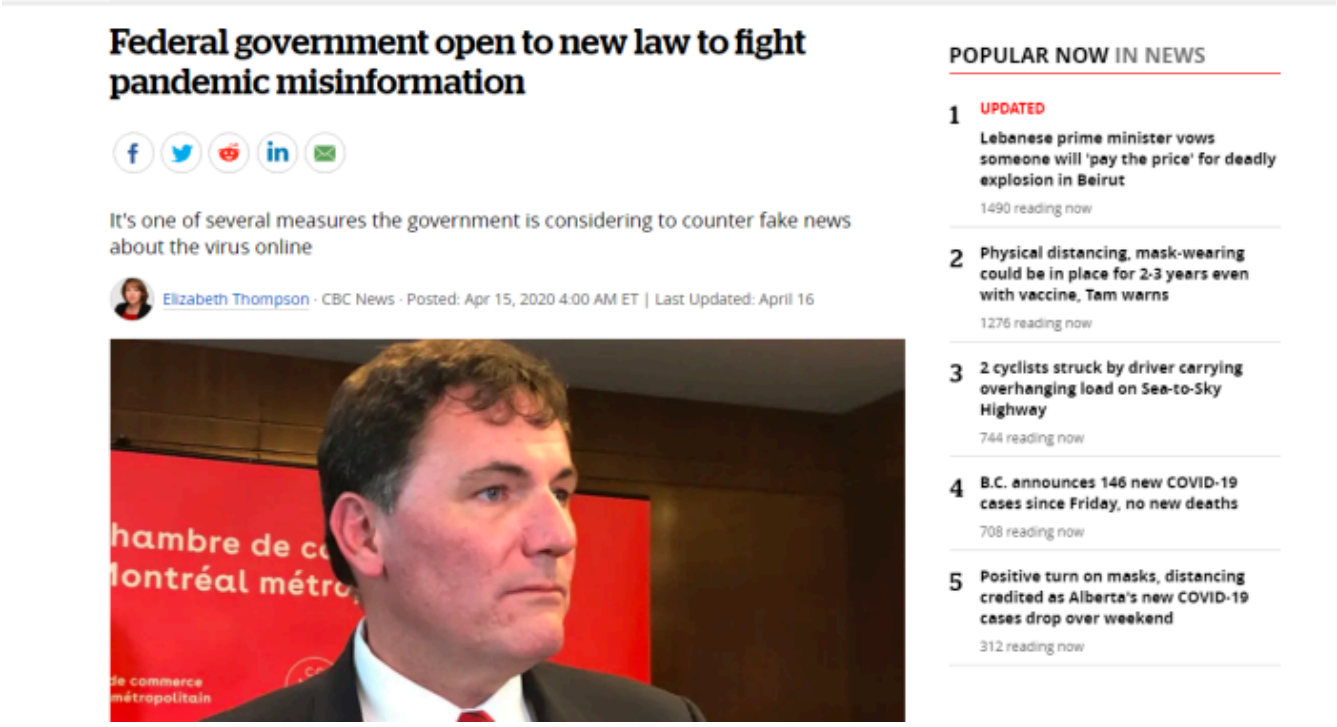
Jobs
Francis LeBlanc
Founder and Principal, Fillmore Strategies Inc.
Government of Canada
8 yrs 8 mos
Chief of Staff to the Minister of Foreign Affairs
Jul 2004 – Feb 2006 · 1 yr 8 mos
Senior political advisor to the Minister. Provided political direction to the Department of Foreign Affairs on cnoduct of Canada's Foreign Policy. Interfaced with senior levels of Government of Canada, including office of the Prime Minister. Managed and directed a staff of 25+ political and admnistrative staff and adminstered budget of $2 million.
Chief of Staff to the Minister of Health and Intergovernmental Affairs
Dec 2003 – Jul 2004 · 8 mos
Senior political advisor to the Minister. Provided political direction to two distint Ministries, employing 10,000 public servants and policy coordination across Government. Managed and directed staff of 25+ political and administrative staff in Minister's office.
Show 2 more roles
Member of Parliament
House of Commons
Nov 1988 – Jun 1997 · 8 yrs 8 mos
Represented large rural constituency of 80,000 in Parliament of Canada. Participated in legislative process and Parliamentary debate. Chaired Parliamentary Committees. Led and participated in international parliamnetary delegations.

Francis LeBlanc is a former Liberal M.P., and held various Government roles after that. He is now Board Member at CIVIX.


Federal government open to new law to fight pandemic misinformation
It's one of several measures the government is considering to counter fake news about the virus online
Elizabeth Thompson · CBC News · Posted: Apr 15, 2020 4:00 AM ET | Last Updated: April 16
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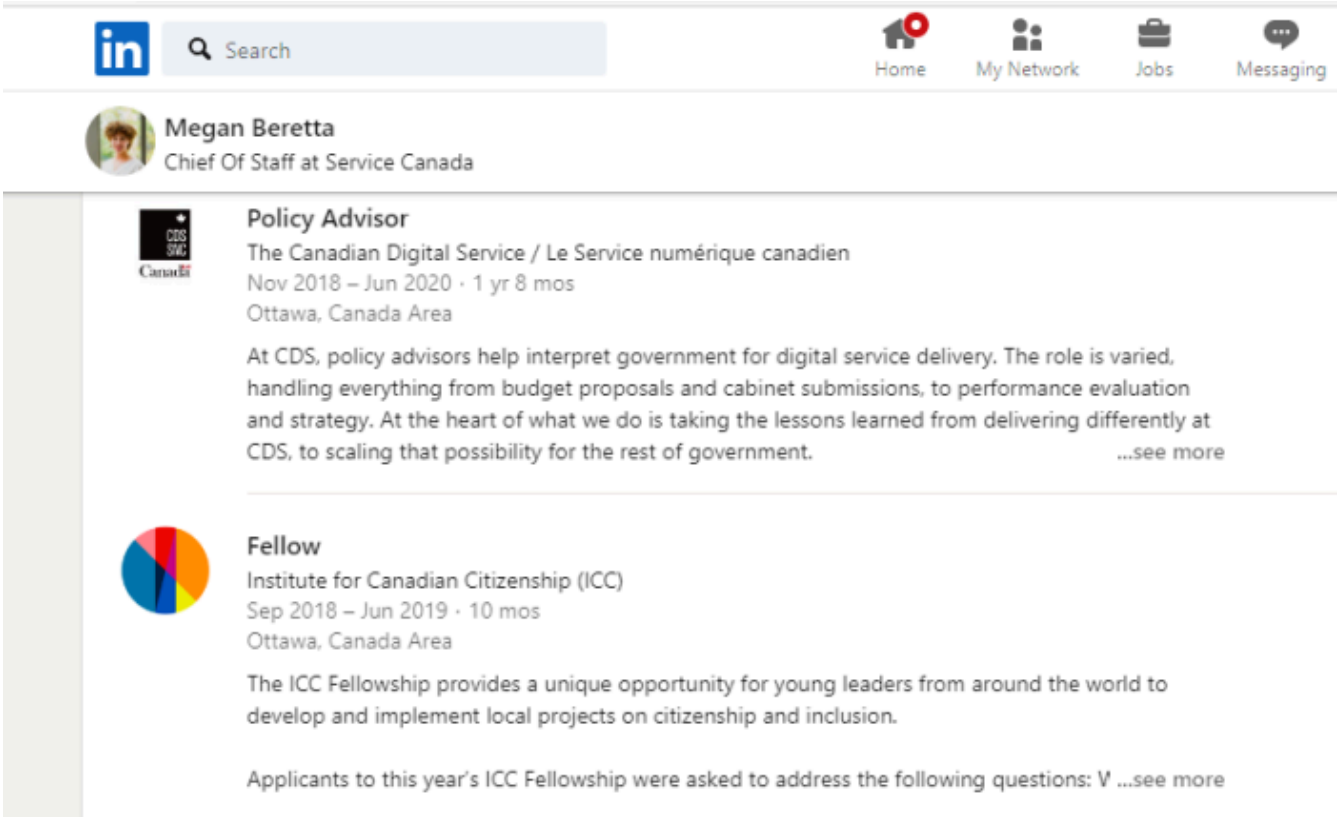
By the way, and relation to Dominic LeBlanc, head of the Privy Council? He previously proposed passing laws to combat “misinformation” related to coronavirus.

12. Megan Beretta: Ties To Several Groups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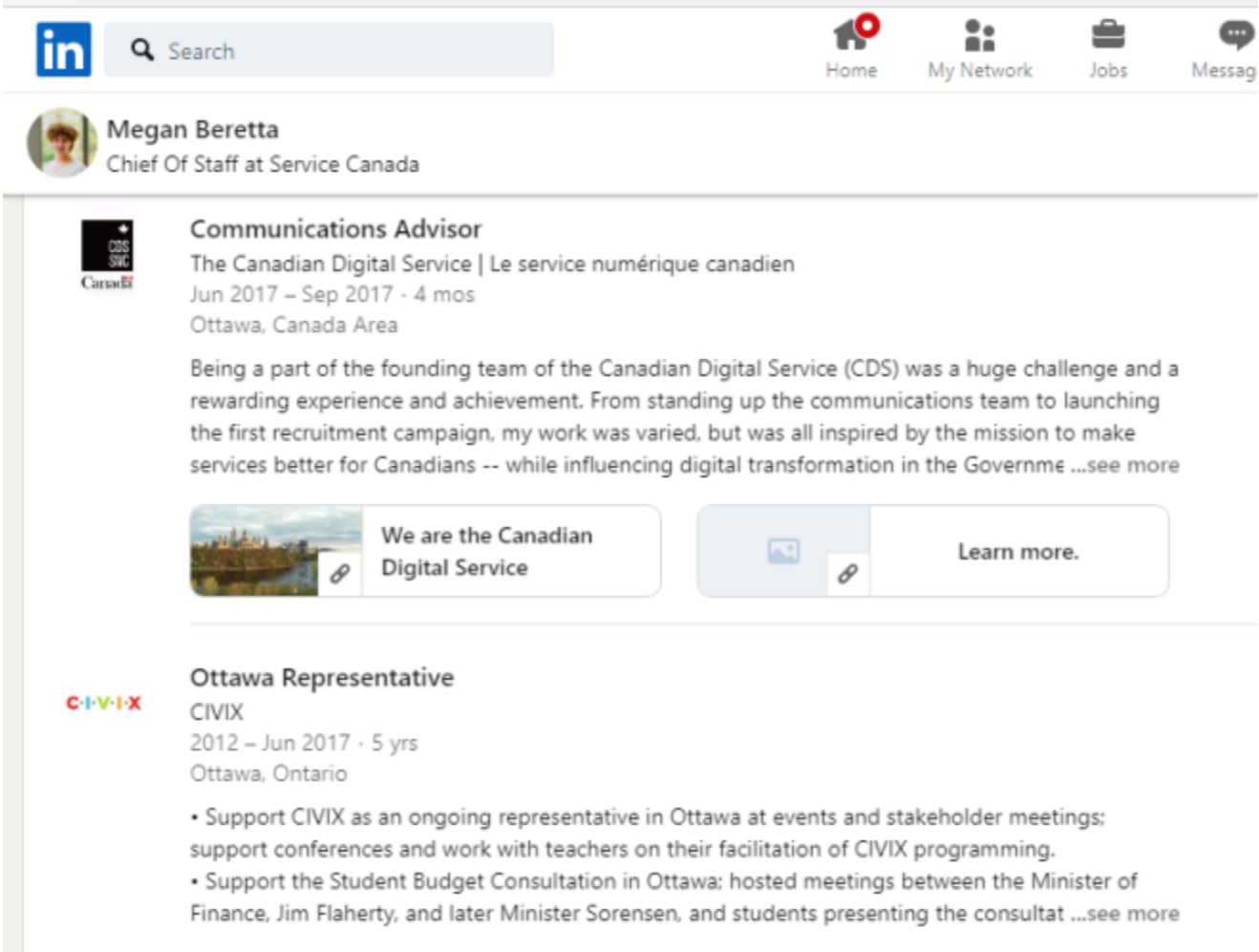
Messaging
Megan Beretta
Chief Of Staff at Service Canada
Policy Advisor
The Canadian Digital Service / Le Service numérique canadien
Nov 2018 – Jun 2020 · 1 yr 8 mos
Ottawa, Canada Area
At CDS, policy advisors help interpret government for digital service delivery. The role is varied, handling everything from budget proposals and cabinet submissions, to performance evaluation and strategy. At the heart of what we do is taking the lessons learned from delivering differently at CDS, to scaling that possibility for the rest of government. ...see more
Fellow
Institute for Canadian Citizenship (ICC)
Sep 2018 – Jun 2019 · 10 mos
Ottawa, Canada Area
The ICC Fellowship provides a unique opportunity for young leaders from around the world to develop and implement local projects on citizenship and inclusion.
Applicants to this year's ICC Fellowship were asked to address the following questions: W ...see more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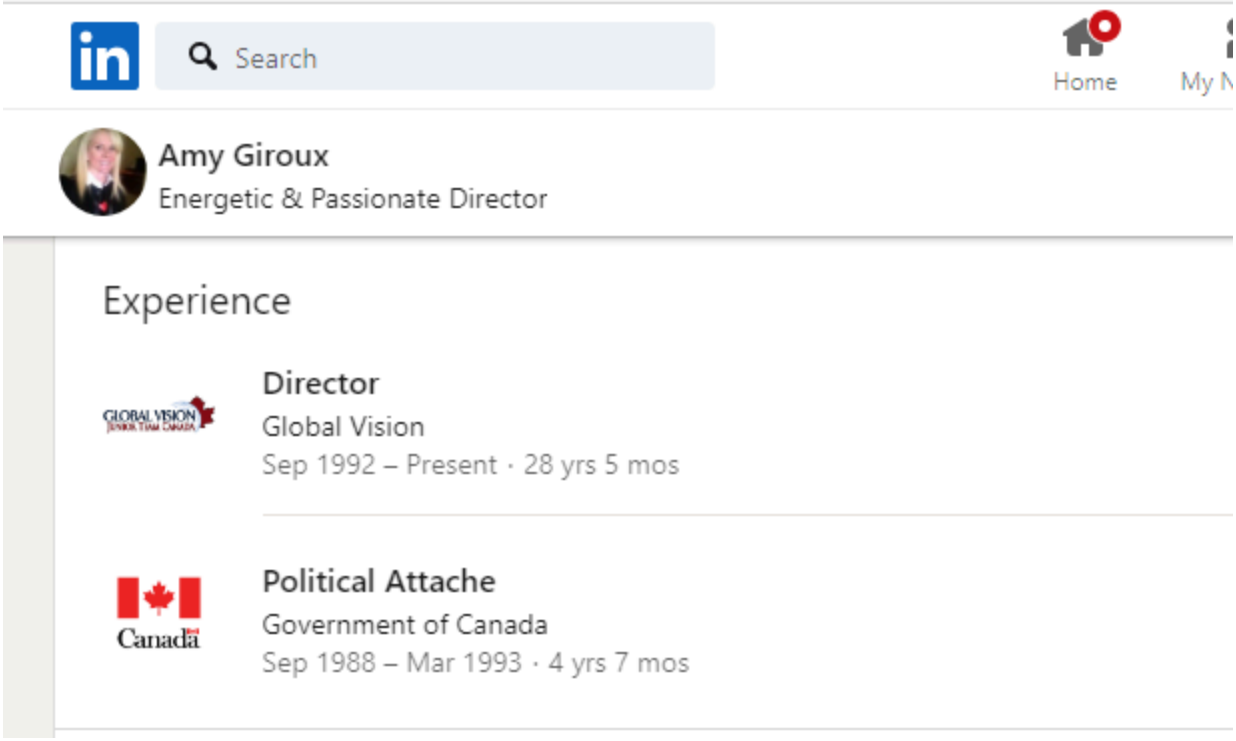
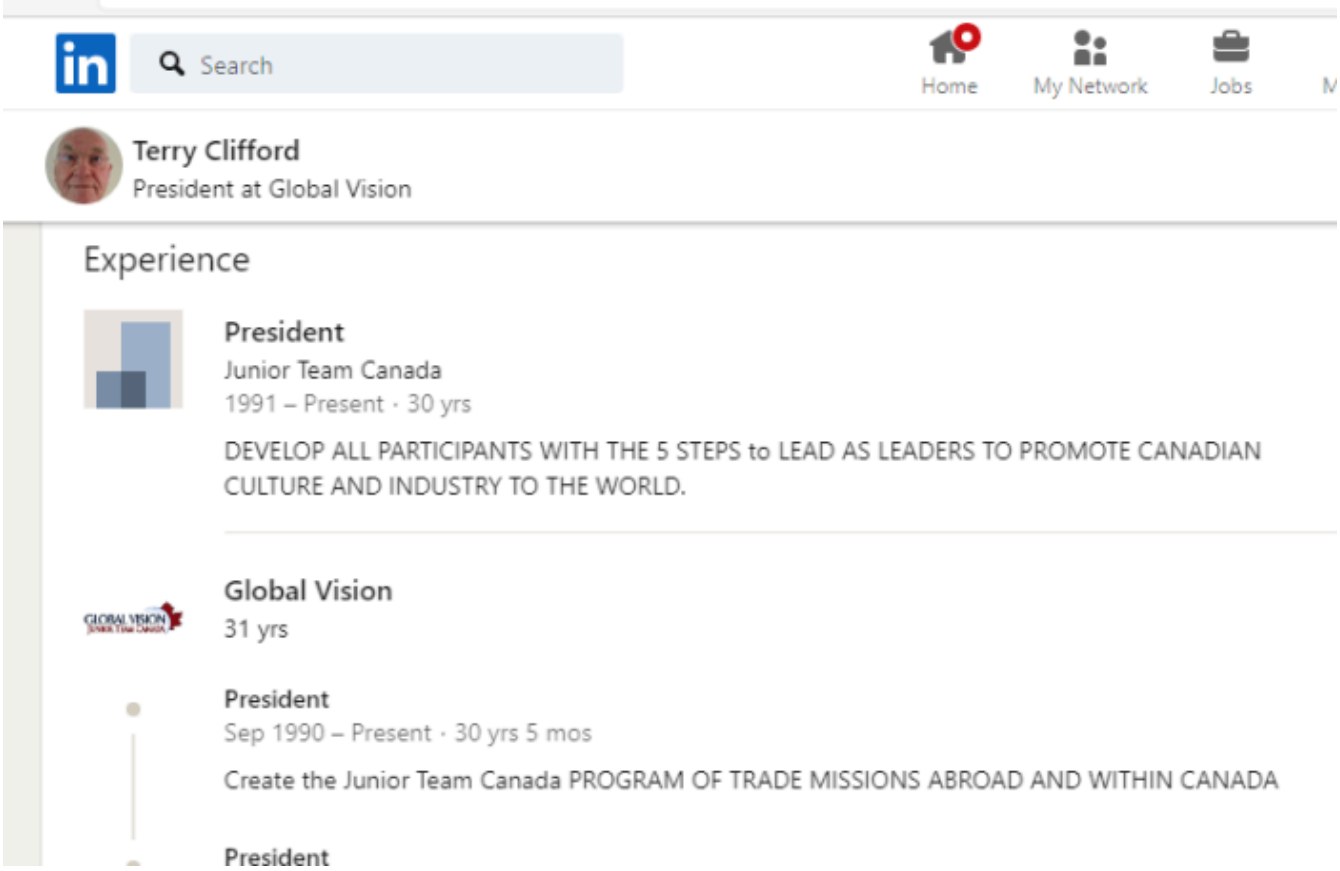
Messag
Megan Beretta
Chief Of Staff at Service Canada
Communications Advisor
The Canadian Digital Service | Le service numérique canadien
Jun 2017 – Sep 2017 · 4 mos
Ottawa, Canada Area
Being a part of the founding team of the Canadian Digital Service (CDS) was a huge challenge and a rewarding experience and achievement. From standing up the communications team to launching the first recruitment campaign, my work was varied, but was all inspired by the mission to make services better for Canadians -- while influencing digital transformation in the Governme ...see more
We are the Canadian Digital Service
Learn more.
Ottawa Representative
CIVIX
2012 – Jun 2017 · 5 yrs
Ottawa, Ontario
• Support CIVIX as an ongoing representative in Ottawa at events and stakeholder meetings; support conferences and work with teachers on their facilitation of CIVIX programming.
• Support the Student Budget Consultation in Ottawa; hosted meetings between the Minister of Finance, Jim Flaherty, and later Minister Sorensen, and students presenting the consultat ...see more

Megan Beretta has worked for CIVIX, Institute for Canadian Citizenship, Canadian Digital Service, and studied at Oxford Internet Institute.

13. Giroux, Clifford: Ex-Mulroney Operatives

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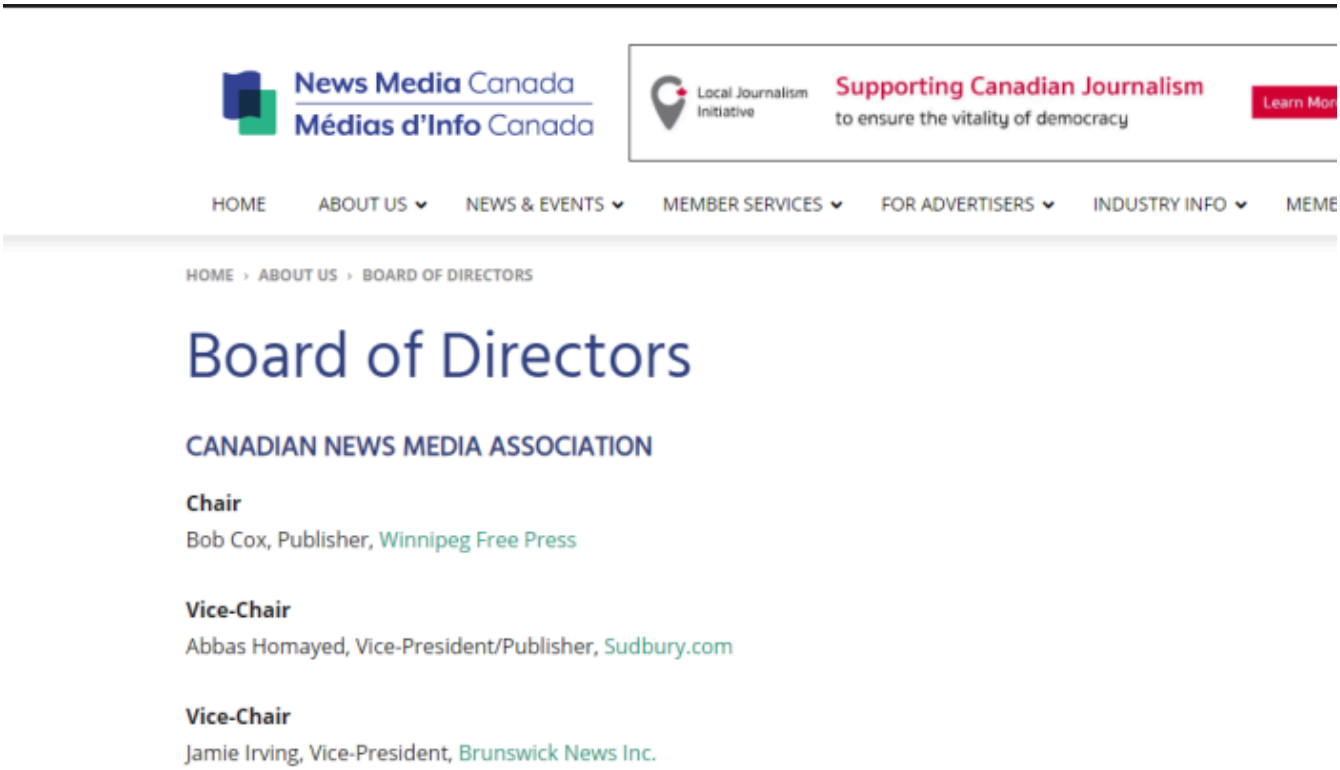
Jobs
Terry Clifford
President at Global Vision
Experience
President
Junior Team Canada
1991 – Present · 30 yrs
DEVELOP ALL PARTICIPANTS WITH THE 5 STEPS to LEAD AS LEADERS TO PROMOTE CANADIAN CULTURE AND INDUSTRY TO THE WORLD.
Global Vision
31 yrs
President
Sep 1990 – Present · 30 yrs 5 mos
Create the Junior Team Canada PROGRAM OF TRADE MISSIONS ABROAD AND WITHIN CANADA
President

Amy Giroux, who is now a Director Global Vision, was a political attache for Brian Mulroney’s Government from 1988 until 1993. Terrence Clifford, the Founder, was a Member of Parliament for Mulroney.

14. News Media Canada On Disinformation



> News Media Canada will design, develop and promote a public awareness program entitled “SPOT Fake News Online”. The project will provide Canadians of all ages with straightforward tools to encourage them to critically assess digital media and identify misleading or defamatory disinformation

News Media Canada is supposed to be developing a program to combat misinformation online. Problem is, the Directors all come from mainstream outlets, who are heavily subsidized by the Government, or rather, taxpayers. There is a conflict of interest in claiming to be the leader in truth seeking.

15. Politics Mixing With Media Fact Checking

The examples above are not exhaustive, but they do show an interesting pattern: many of these taxpayer funded groups who are supposed to fight “misinformation” are run by people with political ties. This seems to be an obvious conflict of interest.

Yes, it’s an overused cliche, but this is a case of putting the fox in charge of monitoring the hen house.

Press Release: Gov’t Funds “Online Disinformation” Initiatives In 2019
https://archive.is/cVTQ0
Groups Receiving Tax Dollars In “Disinfo” Initiatives
https://archive.is/VS3Fm
Emergency Funds Available $500M (CV Funds)
https://archive.is/F9P5F
Canada’s International Engagement Strategy
https://archive.is/zR6yp
Public Policy Forum (Democracy)
https://archive.is/lQw4j
Peter Donolo’s LinkedIn Profile
https://archive.is/DXsbT
Kathleen Monk’s LinkedIn Profile
Robert Asselin’s LinkedIn Page
Elizabeth Dubois’ LinkedIn Page
Rachel Curran’s LinkedIn Page
Francis LeBlanc’s LinkedIn Page
Megan Beretta’s LinkedIn Page
Amy Giroux’s LinkedIn Page
Terrence Clifford’s LinkedIn Page
News Media Canada Governance

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